

US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5



466297

Waste Contained

By FELICIA GAYLE
Times Staff Writer

GRIFFITH — Hazardous liquid waste has been prevented from leaking from a drum burial site in Griffith, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

American Chemical Services surrounded the Colfax Street burial site with clay, according to John McGuire, administrator of the EPA's Midwest Region. About 2,000 drums are buried at the site.

The clay was scraped from the adjoining Griffith landfill, McGuire said. "The exposed clay around the site will be monitored periodically to determine there is no leaching or another threat or an oil or hazardous waste discharge from the site that could drain toward the (town's) landfill," he said.

Last August, EPA asked the firm to stop the leaking. Cleanup progressed according to a program outlined by the EPA.

Using its authority under the Clean

Water Act, the EPA convinced the firm to patch an area of the burial site with clay. The two- to three-foot patch was completed by a Nov. 1 deadline.

EPA suggested the clay patch to prevent pollution from getting into Turkey Creek, according to EPA inspector Ralph Coons.

The 2,000 drums buried next to the Griffith landfill were placed there about 15 years ago, before strict laws were imposed on disposal of hazardous waste, Coons said. He said he doesn't know what is in the drums.

Oil leaking from the site contained phenol, a substance the EPA has defined as hazardous.

Coons said James Tarpo of American Chemical Services said the drums were punctured before they were buried, to prevent accumulation of waste.

The burial site won't have to meet EPA hazardous waste siting criteria because the drums were buried before the criteria were developed, Coons said.

EPA engineers inspected the site in May and August.